

The How of Working with Character Strengths

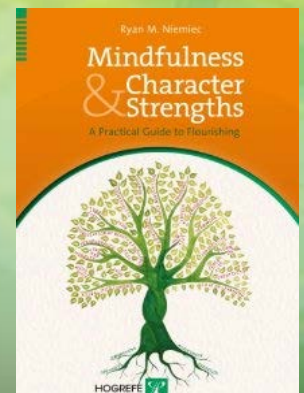
Institute of Coaching, Harvard Medical School
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The WHY of Character Strengths

Why Do Character Strengths Matter?



many “facets” to our character...

Identity

**Positive
outcomes**



**Collective
good**

POSITIVE
EMOTIONS

Character Strengths and Well-Being (PERMA)

ENGAGEMENT

POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS

MEANING

ACCOMPLISHMENT




The WHAT of Character Strengths

**A Groundbreaking
Language**



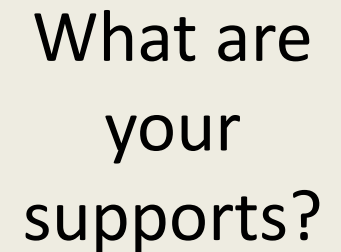
Types of Strengths

Talents




What are
you good at?

Resources



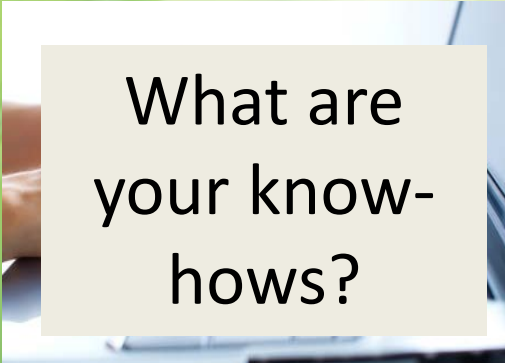
What are
your
supports?

Character Strengths



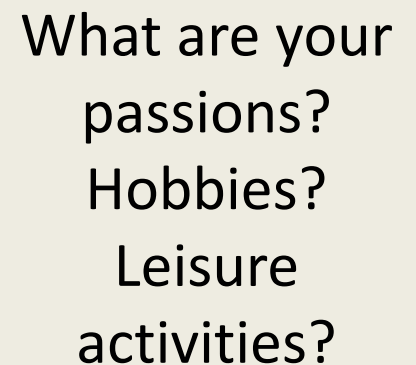
Who are
you?

Skills



What are
your know-
hows?

Interests




What are your
passions?
Hobbies?
Leisure
activities?

The Work of “VIA”

VIA Institute on
Character

VIA Classification


VIA Survey



Advancing
the science
& practice








Over 400
scientific
publications



Every 15
seconds

A “Common Language” of Strengths

WISDOM	CREATIVITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originality • Adaptive • Ingenuity 	CURIOSITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest • Novelty-Seeking • Exploration • Openness 	JUDGMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Thinking Things Through • Open-mindedness 	LOVE OF LEARNING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastering New Skills & Topics • Systematically Adding to Knowledge 	PERSPECTIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisdom • Providing Wise Counsel • Taking the Big Picture View
COURAGE	BRAVERY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valor • Not Shrinking from Fear • Speaking Up for What's Right 	PERSEVERANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence • Industry • Finishing What One Starts 	HONESTY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticity • Integrity 	ZEST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitality • Enthusiasm • Vigor • Energy • Feeling Alive 	
HUMANITY	LOVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Loving and Being Loved • Valuing Close Relations with Others 	KINDNESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generosity • Nurturance • Care & Compassion • Altruism • "Niceness" 			SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of the Motives/Feelings of Self/Others • Knowing what Makes Other People Tick
JUSTICE	TEAMWORK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Social Responsibility • Loyalty 			FAIRNESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just • Not Letting Feelings Bias Decisions About Others 	LEADERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing Group Activities • Encouraging a Group to Get Things Done
TEMPERANCE		FORGIVENESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercy • Accepting Others' Shortcomings • Giving People a Second Chance 	HUMILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modesty • Letting One's Accomplishments Speak for Themselves 	PRUDENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful • Cautious • Not Taking Undue Risks 	SELF-REGULATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Control • Disciplined • Managing Impulses & Emotions
TRANSCENDENCE	APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awe • Wonder • Elevation 	GRATITUDE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thankful for the Good • Expressing Thanks • Feeling Blessed 	HOPE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism • Future-Mindedness • Future Orientation 	HUMOR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playfulness • Bringing Smiles to Others • Lighthearted 	SPIRITUALITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religiousness • Faith • Purpose • Meaning

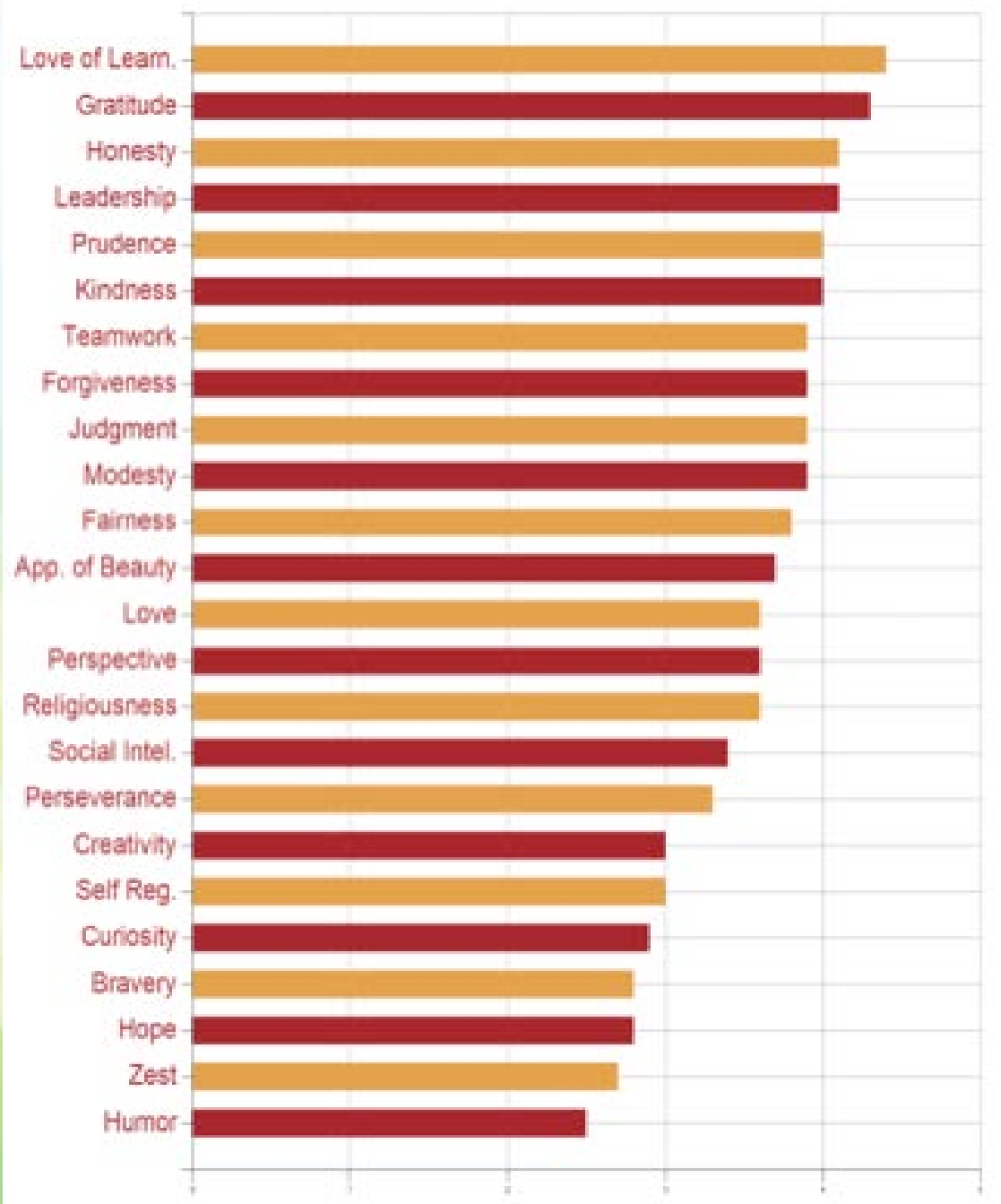
Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing
is not enough; we must do.

-Goethe

The HOW of Character Strengths

Meta-Concepts and Applications





Signature Strengths

- The 3 E's – essential, energizing, easy.
- High

**From
each**



a new way

Meta-analysis

(Schutte & Malouff, 2018)



Start with Spotting Strengths ("Seeing" the Uniqueness)

Strengths-Spotting



1. Label the strength
2. Note the behavior/rationale
3. Express appreciation



Time Orientation	Positive Psychology Intervention	Questions for Self-Exploration
Before a session	Resource priming	What are my best qualities as a helper?
During a session	The mindful pause	What character strengths am I using right now? What might I bring forth?
After a session	Positive reminiscence	WWW in session? What strengths did I use today?

The Aware-Explore-Apply Model (A-E-A)

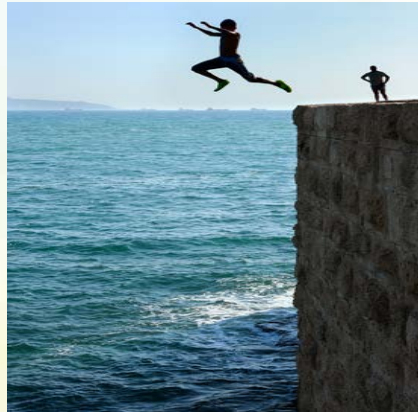
1. Aware



Name and describe
your signature
strengths.



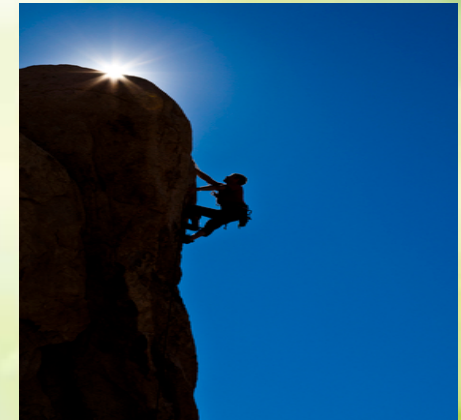
2. Explore



How have you used
these at good times?
Times of stress? To
solve problems? At
work/home? Etc.



3. Apply

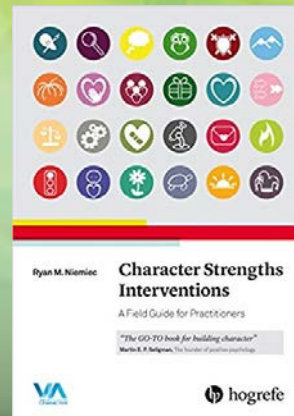


What is 1 way you
might use this
strength more in
your daily life?

-Niemiec (2013; 2014; 2018)

Intervention Areas

1. CS Awareness
2. CS Use
3. Meaning and engagement
4. Specific CS
5. Positive relationships
6. Resilience
7. Goal-setting/achievement
8. Mindfulness



Character Strengths Alignment Activity

Top 5 Strengths

Top 5 Work Tasks

Alignment

- Harzer & Ruch (2016)
- Littman-Ovadia & Niemiec (2017)

Hope for Your Goals

Hope = 1.) Agency and 2.) Pathways

“Hope.... Prudence.... Perseverance”

Character Strengths = 1.) Means and 2.) Ends



- Lopez (2014)
- Snyder (2000)
- Cheavens et al. (2006)
- Niemiec (2018)



Informal practice



Routines practice



Cued practice

What is **Your** “Strength Practice”??

Formal practice



SUMMARY



1. Strengths-spotting: yourself and others
2. Discussing signature strengths
3. Expressing strengths appreciation
4. Character strengths alignment
5. Linking strengths with client goals
6. Using strengths before-during-after a session
7. Aware-Explore-Apply model
8. Your own strengths practice

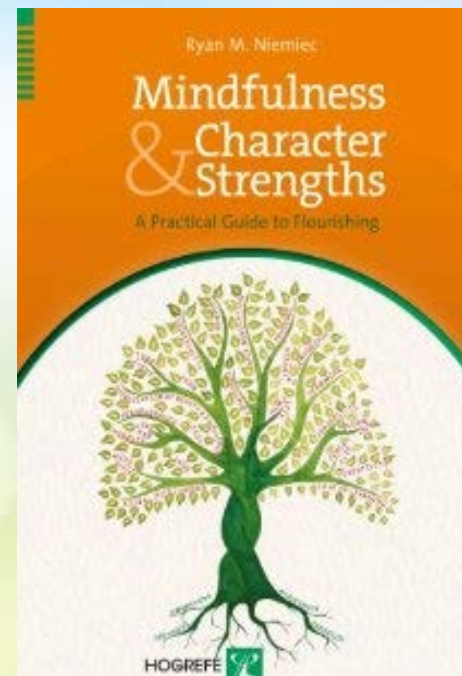
RESOURCES



Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP)

Core themes of the evidence-based, 8-week, manualized program:

1. Mindfulness & Autopilot
2. Signature Strengths
3. Obstacles are Opportunities
4. Mindfulness in Everyday Life
5. Valuing Your Relationships
6. The Golden Mean
7. Authenticity & Goodness
8. Your Engagement with Life



MBSP theoretical and empirical research:

- Pang & Ruch (submitted)
- Bretherton & Niemiec (accepted)
- Sharp (2018)
- Ivtzan et al. (2016)
- Lottman et al. (2016)
- Sharp et al. (2016)
- Niemiec & Lissing (2016)
- Niemiec et al. (2012); Niemiec (2012)
- Baer & Lykins (2011); Baer (2015)



VIA SURVEY

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

REPORTS

COURSES

PROFESSIONALS

RESOURCES

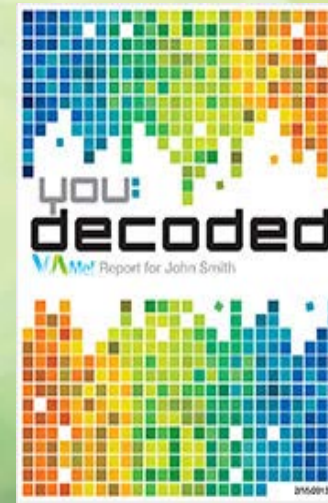
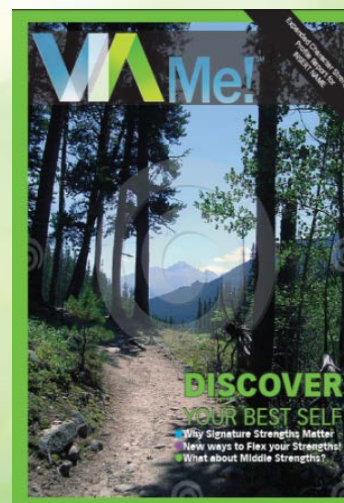
RESEARCH

ABOUT

***Over 400
scientific studies
summarized!**

Resources

***More on all 24
character strengths**



New Character Strengths Assessment Suite!

VIA-IS-R (Revised): 192 items



2 Short Forms

(+ only and +/- keyed)

(Both are 96 items)

2 Virtues Scales

(6 virtues or 3 virtues)

(48- or 24-items)

Signature Strengths
Survey

Global Assessment
of Strengths

Overuse, Underuse,
Optimal-Use Survey

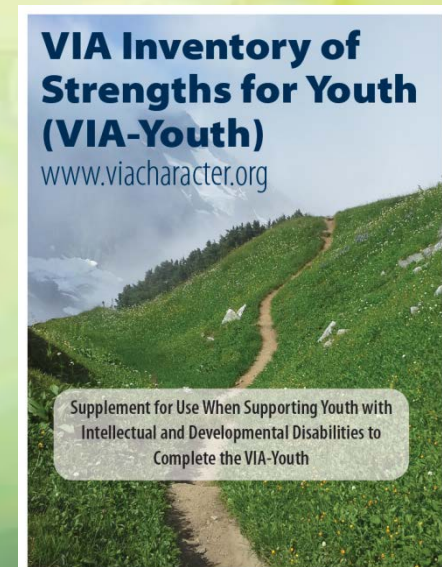
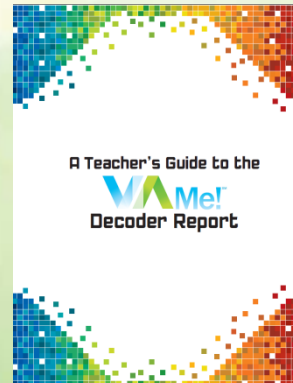
Partner Strengths
Questionnaire

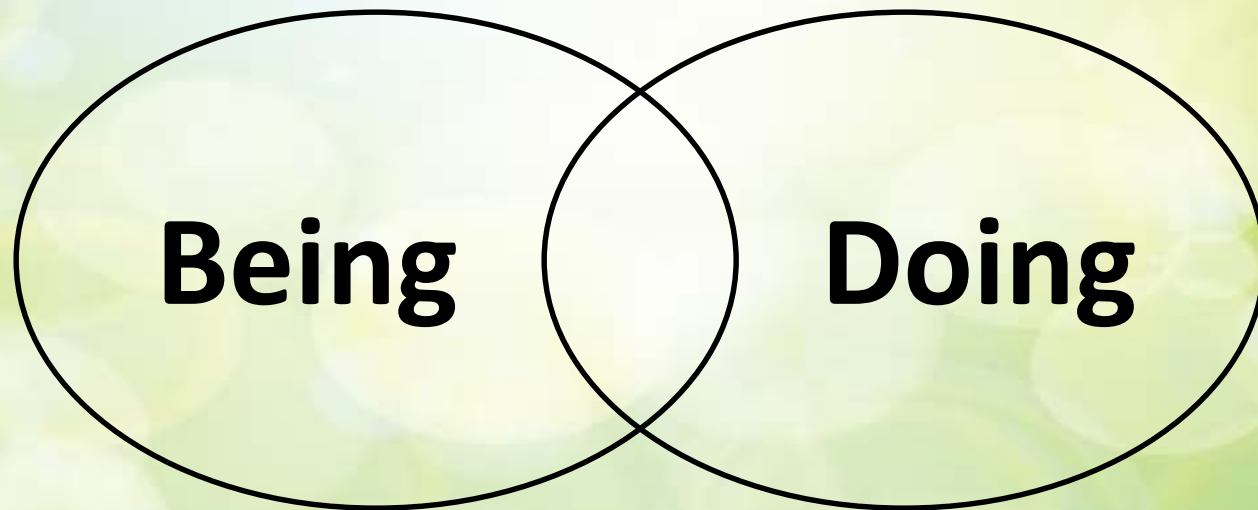
Youth



VIA-Youth Survey

- 24 strengths
- Validated (Park et al. 2006; Ruch et al., 2014)
- Ages 10-17







...the best tool you can offer a client?

Thank You from the VIA Institute!

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